

Promising start by 'makeshift' Wanderers

By **STUART EARP** Wimbledon 1, Wycombe W. 0

Obviously, this was very much a makeshift side and it is to Wycombe's credit that they held the Southern League champions to one goal. Wimbledon fielded virtually their full strength side with centre back Jeff Bryant, centre forward Billy Holmes and Mahon their outstanding players.

Wanderers produced one or two flowing attacks and went close when Evans broke clear before Ian Cooke saved the day with a perfectly timed tackle in the box during the second half. At the other end, Fuschillo was

always there when Wimbledon threatened and he made two crucial interventions to save probable goals.

The only goal came in the 83rd minute after one moment of magic from Mahon. Receiving the ball on half way he produced an electrifying burst of speed to sprint past Alexander and then switched the ball inside to Holmes on the edge of the box. The centre forward turned and sent in a shot on the left foot that was deflected past the helpless Maskell.

Anthony almost stole an

equaliser on two occasions in the final minutes after a moment's lapse by goalkeeper Dickie Guy but the home defence held firm until the final whistle.

All in all this was a useful performance from the Blues in difficult rock hard conditions.

WIMBLEDON: R. Guy; H. Falconer, J. Bryant, D. Donaldson, W. Edwards; I. Cooke, D. Bassett, S. Rice (sub G. Aitken 67 mins.); K. Somers, W. Holmes, M. Mahon.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Fuschillo, K. Mead (sub. D. Cotterell 45 mins), J. Delaney, D. Bullock; G. Mackenzie, P. Birdseye, D. Alexander; H. Kennedy, D. Evans, G. Anthony.

Referee: G. Rigby.
Half time: 0-0. Goalscorer, Wimbledon — Holmes (83).

CONSIDERING the high standard of opposition at Wimbledon on Tuesday evening, Wycombe Wanderers can feel reasonably happy with their first outing of the season. However, there is still a good deal of work to be done, especially up front, before the opening day of the season on August 16.

The deciding goal, a scrambled effort, came only seven minutes from time and was just reward for Wimbledon who had looked the more dangerous side for much of the 90 minutes.

Wanderers welcomed back former players Paul Fuschillo, John Delaney and Geoff Anthony and gave newcomer Derek Cotterell a run out in the second half.

Fuschillo and Delaney, who have both returned from professional soccer with Brighton and Bournemouth respectively, struggled early in the game and looked a little slow at times but both improved after the interval. Fuschillo, at right back, was given the task of marking Mick Mahon, the former Colchester forward. Mahon is probably the most skilful winger outside the Football League and in the first half he gave Fuschillo a tough time. Delaney, who was skipper for the evening, was marking Keiron Somers and also had his hands full.

MAKESHIFT

On the whole, the defence looked pretty solid with John Maskell always sound in goal. Keith Mead fitted in well alongside Delaney while Dave Bullock gave his usual 100 per cent.

The midfield three of Graham Mackenzie, Paul Birdseye and Dave Alexander all worked hard but Birdseye had a far happier game at left back in the second half when Cotterell came on and showed some nice touches. Bullock moved to centre back after the interval.

Manager Brian Lee's biggest problem, however, is going to be in the forwards. The front three on Tuesday — Geoff Anthony, Dylan Evans and Howard Kennedy — showed plenty of speed but were physically out-matched by Wimbledon's powerful back four.

Anthony has lost none of his skill while Evans' pace caused one or two anxious moments to the "Dons." Kennedy started well but is not a striker and will probably revert to his normal midfield role. When Tony Horsemann is back, the front three should have more balance and it will be interesting to see how Derek Harris, the Loughborough centre forward, performs in the other friendlies.